

Chatterbox #201 – Naoshima – the island of art

Episode description

In this special Chatterbox episode, Andrew talks to Suzanne about his trip to the island of Naoshima. Join them as they chat about public art installations, electric bikes, beaches, and galleries!

Fun fact

Naoshima, an island located in the Seto Inland Sea, is known for its modern art and architecture. In fact, one of its most famous pieces is Yayoi Kusama's yellow, black-dotted pumpkin!

Expressions included in the learning materials

- Oh my goodness
- A [something] lover
- To pepper
- To get cracking
- What happens in [somewhere]
stays in [somewhere]



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips. Suzanne!

Suzanne: Yes?

Andrew: How are you?

Suzanne: I'm doing pretty good, how are you?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty well also. I'm a little bit excited today, actually, 'cause I got a new toy in the mail that I ordered online.

Suzanne: Oh wow, what is your toy?

Andrew: Well, it's a fitness tracker. Do you know what one of these is, a fitness tracker?

Suzanne: I do, I have a Fitbit.

Andrew: Oh, I almost got the Fitbit, but in the end I got a Chinese brand called Xiaomi. I got one of their fitness trackers instead because it was way cheaper.

Suzanne: OK, I'm not sure which one Olivier, my boyfriend, has but it's something with an S as well. And it's really, really awesome and was not so expensive. It's pretty amazing, it has GPS and all of these cool things.

Andrew: Yeah, it counts how many steps I've walked and how many calories I've burned, tracks my sleep. It checks my heart rate—that's really why I bought it. I was interested to check my heart rate when I'm exercising and even when I'm resting. So, yeah, I've just had it for a day, but I was in the gym earlier this morning and I was testing it out and I think I'm gonna like it. I think I am.

Suzanne: Nice, and how's your heart rate?

Andrew: Man, it was really beating quite fast after I had lifted some weights, let me tell you.

- Suzanne: See, people think that lifting heavy things just means building muscle and not working out your heart. But it's not true, your heart is totally gonna pump faster.
- Andrew: Yeah, in fact, I mean I haven't tested it yet but, my heart was beating I think it was 130 beats per minute after I had done a set of weight lifting. And I highly doubt that my heart rate will get up that fast when I'm jogging. I don't think it will get that high. So, it may even be better for your heart to lift weights then to do cardio.
- Suzanne: Yeah, and good for your bones, as well.
- Andrew: Indeed. But, anyways, that was my distraction of the day, fooling around with this watch.
- Suzanne: Well, today's episode is a Chatterbox episode and that's when we have a normal, casual conversation about a topic.
- Andrew: And today we are continuing the third, and I think this will be the final, part talking about my summer vacation. I don't wanna bore you guys with my vacation for too much longer, but we're gonna do one more.
- Suzanne: I think I can speak for everyone when I say it's not boring. You have very adventurous, funny things that happen to you throughout your vacation so it's very, I find it very interesting.
- Andrew: That's awesome, I'm happy to hear that. So, guys, if you haven't heard the other episodes about my vacation, there's two other Chatterbox episodes that you can tune into and you can do that later. It doesn't have to be in sequence, I don't think. But, today I'm gonna tell you visiting the island of Naoshima in Japan.
- Suzanne: All right, and we'll get started with the conversation right after this message.
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- Suzanne: All right Andrew, I wanna hear all about this island.
- Andrew: One of my Korean friends actually tipped me off about this island because she had visited about a month prior to my trip. And I asked her, like, oh you were just in Japan, what did you do? Where did you go? What did you see? What did you eat? You know, I **peppered** her with a lot of questions and she said, "Hands down, the best place I visited in Japan was Naoshima." So.

Suzanne: Wow, the best in the whole country, she said.

Andrew: The whole country.

Suzanne: Wow.

Andrew: Well, now, keep in mind she didn't travel the whole country. Japan is surprisingly huge but, yeah, she told me about it and I did some research on the internet and I decided this is a place I think I have to visit. Because what's special about Naoshima is that it's quite a small island, I think it's only 14 square kilometres.

Suzanne: Wow.

Andrew: But, there are about 20 art galleries and museums on the island. So, it's a destination for **art lovers**. Most of the galleries are modern and contemporary art, and there's also a lot of public art installations on the island you can just see when you're walking around.

Suzanne: This sounds like a little heaven, I mean, a little island of art, right?

Andrew: Yeah, totally.

Suzanne: I mean, maybe not for everyone. But, for me, it seems like I would really just love to go see something like that. That seems like a dream.

Andrew: Yeah, I thought so too. So, that's why I wanted to visit and I went to Naoshima right after I climbed Mount Fuji.

Suzanne: Oh, how long after? One day after?

Andrew: The next morning, the next morning I took off.

Suzanne: So, how were your legs doing?

Andrew: They actually felt all right, I was surprised. I climbed Mount Fuji and then slept, woke up, went to Naoshima. And, now it's not too far away, if you take the bullet train.

Suzanne: Oh.

Andrew: But.

Suzanne: That sounds interesting.

Andrew: The bullet train—the high-speed train—is very expensive.

Suzanne: OK.

- Andrew: And, the host at the guesthouse that I was staying at recommended that I take the local train to Naoshima or actually to the port where you can catch the ferry to Naoshima. And I thought oh, that sounds cool, you know she said the scenery is very nice and very beautiful and very peaceful. So I consulted with my friend who I was travelling with, my travel companion, and we said sure, let's save some money, see some of the Japanese countryside scenery and take the local train. But, in the end, I think this is a mistake because it took so, so long.
- Suzanne: Uh oh.
- Andrew: It took us all day to get there.
- Suzanne: No.
- Andrew: What would probably have been an hour or an hour and a half train ride on the bullet train ended up taking about 8 hours.
- Suzanne: **Oh my goodness**, that's ridiculous, that's crazy. That's like your whole vacation day.
- Andrew: It was really my fault because, as I mentioned in the last Chatterbox episode about climbing Mount Fuji, this was a spontaneous trip where I just wanted to go with the flow. I didn't do too much preparation or research in advance, I was kind of just going with the flow and I had this recommendation to take the scenic route. And so I took the scenic route. But, what I didn't realize is that the railway lines, I guess maybe I'm just an inexperienced train rider, but I had envisioned that the train would just go from where we got it to where we wanted to end up, right? The destination. But no, no, no you travel on this train for like four stops, get off, transfer to another line, go two stops, get off, go onto another train, go five stops. It wasn't a continuous ride. I think the longest section was maybe an hour, or an hour and a half. We continually transferred trains and that's what took a long time, because also it's not like you get off one train and the next train's right there, right? You have to wait 30 minutes for the next train or something like that, so.
- Suzanne: Wow.
- Andrew: Yeah, that was a mistake if you travel in Japan, don't take the local line.
- Suzanne: Note to self.
- Andrew: Don't listen to your friendly guesthouse host.

- Suzanne: 'Cause sometimes it's important to remind yourself that saving money is not as important as saving time when you're on vacation, you know? Sometimes time is more important than the extra money that it may cost.
- Andrew: Absolutely, absolutely, but anyways it was an experience. So, finally we got to the port where you can catch the ferry to Naoshima. And we took the ferry over, very, very beautiful ferry ride. It was only about 20 minutes, so this island is actually super close to the coast of Japan. It's right near Okayama on the east coast of Japan.
- Suzanne: Oh wow.
- Andrew: So, yeah, when we did finally arrive on the island it was about 4:00 in the afternoon. And we are only planning to stay there for one night, so we're, like, man, we better **get cracking** and start checking out this island, 'cause we only have about 24 hours. So, all of the material that I had read online recommended renting a bike and exploring the island via bicycle. And I'm super game for that, you know, I'm **a bike lover**.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: So, first we checked into our guesthouse and actually we met some travellers from Scotland, and they said, oh what are you guys gonna do today? We said, we're gonna rent bikes and explore the island. And they said, you better get the electric bicycle. And I said, why? I don't need an electric bike, you know I'm in pretty good shape. I just climbed Mount Fuji.
- Suzanne: Oh, Andrew, oh no.
- Andrew: And I feel great. They said, uh, trust us, trust us, get the electric bicycle. So we said OK, OK, OK, yeah, yeah, sure, we'll get the electric bicycle.
- Suzanne: Wait, I was gonna say maybe you shoulda said, yeah, well, we trusted our guesthouse owner.
- Andrew: Suzanne, do you think I could learn a lesson that quickly? Takes me many, many times. I have to be more, well, I mean, yeah, so I guess I did trust the guesthouse owner. But I didn't trust the Scottish travellers. When I went to the cafe where they rent bikes, to borrow a bike for the day, the lady at the cafe said do you want the electric bicycle or the manual, regular bicycle? I said regular bicycle, come on, it's fine. That was a huge mistake, though, because Naoshima is really hilly and they're big hills. These were intense, steep, winding, mountain roads.
- Suzanne: They didn't tell you that?

- Andrew: They said it was a mountainous island, but I'm used to riding a bike so I thought it would be all right. But it was killer.
- Suzanne: I know, but you just hiked Mount Fuji in, like, 5 hours and a half, like your legs are probably, like, oh man.
- Andrew: It was, I mean I don't wanna complain too much 'cause it was gorgeous, it was beautiful and riding up these mountains was super, super cool. Because you could see the ocean and it was so quiet and peaceful and just beautiful forest. It was gorgeous, but it was so, so hot and I'm riding, you know, it's not like I'm riding a nice road bike that's meant to go fast. This is just a one speed cruiser made for a shorter Japanese person. So it didn't fit me very well and I was struggling, absolutely struggling up these mountain roads.
- So, that was mistake number two I made on the trip.
- Suzanne: Yeah do you know, like, sad trombone? OK, I think I've asked that before.
- Andrew: The sound effect that we make when somebody does something pathetic.
- Suzanne: No, it's OK, oh man. I feel for you.
- Andrew: So we rode around the island, we went up this massive mountain but the awesome part about going up a big mountain is that you get to go down it. So, we got to the peak and, you know, it was embarrassing too when we were struggling up this mountain because there's a bunch of other people that passed us that were on electric bikes and they're like, just like going past us and we're, me and my friend are just drenched in sweat, in the hot sun struggling up these mountains and these other people are just leisurely passing us.
- Suzanne: Yeah, I would have shaken my fists at them, like, argh!
- Andrew: Yeah, well, we got to the top and we looked at the scenery and then we headed down the mountain, which was super fun, going down this really long, long stretch of downhill, and when we got to the bottom there's a beautiful beach. A really nice beach, so of course we went swimming right away, hung out at the beach. There's a lot of people hanging out just relaxing. Super, super gorgeous sunset was there to greet us. They had a beer vending machine, so.
- Suzanne: What, that's awesome, at the beach?
- Andrew: Yeah, at the beach, we bought a beer from the vending machine.
- Suzanne: That's amazing.

- Andrew: And had a drink and relaxed. And, yeah, it was great. So that was our first day.
- Suzanne: Wait, you spent the night there?
- Andrew: Yup, we spent the night there. So that was what we did. The first day was just bike around the island and hang out at the beach. And then on day two, we woke up early to check out the museums and the art galleries.
- Suzanne: Where did you guys sleep? In a hotel? Or like camping, or?
- Andrew: We just stayed in a guesthouse.
- Suzanne: Oh, OK.
- Andrew: Because of course I left everything to the last minute, so a lot of the accommodation was all booked up. So it was a guesthouse for us, but for one night it was totally fine. Japanese guesthouses are super nice, super clean.
- Suzanne: Cool.
- Andrew: So there was no complaints from me there.
- Suzanne: That's so cool, I like this idea of a guesthouse. I'm new to it, so very cool.
- Andrew: So, there's this Japanese architect named Tadao Ando, I possibly am mispronouncing that, but he is responsible for constructing a lot of the galleries that are on Naoshima.
- Suzanne: OK.
- Andrew: And kind of his claim to fame is working with concrete, and I was really impressed with his designs and his constructions. Even more impressive, I think, is that he didn't receive any formal architect training, which is wild to me. Like, I think if you wanna become an architect that's one of the things that it would be really hard to teach yourself, you know? It's almost like I'm not sure exactly how that worked. But that's one of the things I learned about him.
- Suzanne: It just blows me away, because in a lot of schools, like, in North America, some of those programs last like 5, 6 years in just undergrad because they're so difficult and there's just so much information, you know, to learn. So that's really impressive.
- Andrew: Absolutely. So the first stop on day two was to check out the Tadao Ando gallery where there's a lot of information about some of his building that he's made throughout Japan. That was really cool to see.

Andrew: And after that we went to another gallery and this one again was by Tadao Ando. And it was actually a Korean artist whose name is Lee Ufan or, in Korean, Lee U Hwan. And he's a Korean artist but he spent the majority of his life in Japan and there's just this amazing, beautiful gallery dedicated to his work.

Actually, I was just shocked because this gallery was like a concrete bunker that was built, kind of, into the side of a mountain in front of the ocean on this island in Japan. And it was so calm and clean and peaceful and there were, maybe, I would say ten or twelve pieces of art in the whole gallery. Like it was very, very minimal and I was, like, wow this is, like, such an amazing gallery and it's so well built and it's here to showcase such a small selection of art. You know, like, it took us maybe, I don't know, we were in and out in, like, 30 minutes, I don't know. There just wasn't, I mean you can sit and stare at a painting all day, that's not really my style—I'm not a huge art connoisseur, although I like it.

But to me, the impressive thing was just the grandeur of the building. For such a small collection it really, it was almost more the gallery itself was, it just complemented the work inside so well. It was nice to see that relationship between the work and the gallery. It was something I'd never thought about before, but it really heightened the experience.

Suzanne: In my mind, that minimalist feeling is very Japanese. I admire it very much.

Andrew: Well, I know we have a lot of Japanese listeners and that is one I don't know if Japanese people would be aware, but one of the things that pops up to Westerners, when we think of Japan, is a kind of minimalism, where everything is stripped down to the essentials. And that's really what I experienced at this gallery, so that was super cool. I would highly recommend checking that out.

And then, uh, what did we do after? Well, let's think. After that, you know what, it was so hot and we had been riding our bikes around, again, that we had to go up the mountain again to get to the museum, that we thought let's go back to that beach. So we went back to the beach, went swimming again and after that it was time to go. We had to catch the ferry to get back to the mainland.

Andrew: And if there's one thing I could change about my Japanese trip—it was really amazing experience, I got to go to Tokyo, climb Mount Fuji, go to Naoshima, Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, but my one regret is not spending enough time in Naoshima because, like I said, there is about 20 galleries—maybe not quite that many, between 15 and 20—and we checked out two, plus there's a lot of public art installations just outside. Especially there's a couple of the pumpkins by Yayoi Kusama and those are pretty famous. I think she's maybe one of the most famous artists from Japan. So it was cool to see those as well. But I would like to go back and spend more time checking out the other galleries.

Suzanne: Wow, it really seems like an incredible trip, and I have to say I'm a little bit disappointed you didn't tell us anything about Tokyo. But I think, I feel like Tokyo is like Vegas. It's like **what happens in Vegas and Tokyo, stays in Tokyo.**

Andrew: I have some great Tokyo stories but maybe I'll save them for off the air, Suzanne.

Suzanne: Sounds like a plan.

Andrew: We'll wrap it up here. I want to thank everybody for listening. Of course we really appreciate it when you listen to us and support us. And if you want to get really serious about studying English and are looking to get to that next level, we are here to help you.

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Thank you for listening, guys. We will be back soon with another Culips episode. We'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Suzanne: Yeah, bye.

Detailed Explanations

Oh my goodness

Oh my goodness is an interjection or exclamation. It is used to express surprise, shock, amazement, or fear. You can use the expression **oh my goodness** to express any of these emotions. So whether you are startled suddenly or surprised by something that you hear, **oh my goodness** is an appropriate response.

In this episode, Suzanne says **oh my goodness** when Andrew tells her that a train ride that was supposed to take an hour and a half actually took 8 hours. She uses the expression to show her surprise and shock at this big difference in time.

There are many variations of **oh my goodness**, such as:

- Oh my!
- My goodness!
- Goodness me!
- Oh my gosh!
- Oh my God!

All of the above expressions are exclamations to express surprise, shock, or awe. It is important to note that, in Canada, the expression **oh my goodness** is often used interchangeably with oh my God. The expression oh my God is very common in casual conversation, and doesn't have a religious connotation when used in casual conversation.

Here's one more example with **oh my goodness**:

Mary:	I had such a scare at the grocery store the other day.
Terry:	What happened?
Mary:	I was in the fruit and vegetable aisle, and as I picked up a bunch of grapes, an enormous black spider came crawling out and ran over my hand.
Terry:	Oh my goodness! I would have fainted.
Mary:	You should have heard me scream!

A [something] lover

In order to understand the expression **a [something] lover**, it is important to understand what the word lover means. A lover means a romantic partner, like a boyfriend or a wife, or it means a person who likes or enjoys something. Therefore, the expression **a [something] lover** means a person who really likes or admires something.

For example, in this episode, Andrew talks about how Naoshima is the perfect destination for **art lovers**. In other words, Andrew is saying that Naoshima is the perfect destination for people who really enjoy art.

You can use the expression **a [something] lover** to talk about objects, foods, places, people, or animals. Just replace the word something with the thing that you love. For instance, if you really enjoy coffee, and like to talk about it and try different types, you can call yourself **a coffee lover**. Likewise, if you adore cats and can't get enough of them, you can call yourself **a cat lover**.

So whether it's art, coffee, cats, or books, you can use the expression **a [something] lover** to talk about a person who really admires or enjoys something.

Here are a couple more examples with **a [something] lover**:

Claire:	Have you seen the new Swedish film about sailing around the world?
Wesley:	I did! It was a really good movie. I just ordered the collector's edition from Amazon.
Claire:	That's right, I forgot that you collect movies. How many do you think you have?
Wesley:	Oh, off the top of my head, I would say roughly 2,000. I'm a movie lover !
Claire:	You sure are!

Randall:	How was the concert last night?
Flynn:	I loved it! It really whet my appetite for this summer. I have tickets to three big shows.
Randall:	Ouch, tickets to big shows aren't cheap.
Flynn:	When you're a music lover like me, it's totally worth the price of admission. It's more than just a show. It's an experience.

To pepper

The expression **to pepper** something has different possible meanings. First, **to pepper** can mean to sprinkle a small amount of pepper or another spice on food. That is, **to pepper** means to add or season food with pepper or other spices.

Imagine that you are making spaghetti sauce, and you want to ask your partner to add pepper to the sauce. You could do this by saying, "Can you **pepper** the sauce?" Now, imagine that you want your partner to add oregano, another type of spice, to the spaghetti sauce, and they ask you how much oregano to put. If you want them to just sprinkle a small amount in the sauce, you could reply, "Just **pepper** it." So you can use **to pepper** to refer to adding pepper to food or to refer to how much of a seasoning you want on your food.

However, **to pepper** can also mean the opposite. That is, **to pepper** can mean to bombard or shower someone or something with something. For example, in this episode, Andrew talks about how he **peppered** his friend who visited Japan with questions. This means Andrew asked her friend a lot of questions one after another.

Here are a couple more examples with **to pepper**:

Polly:	You'll never guess who I ran into last weekend.
May:	Someone I know?
Polly:	Garfield Lennox.
May:	Oh my goodness! How did he look? Was he with anyone? Did he ask about me?
Polly:	You really peppered me with questions there.
May:	Sorry for all the questions. I just got excited.

Mary:	This chili tastes delicious, but I can't quite put my finger on what it is that I'm tasting. What's your secret?
Lisbeth:	Well, the trick is to pepper the chili with a little bit of cocoa powder.
Mary:	Cocoa? Really? I would have never guessed.
Lisbeth:	Yup! It adds that extra little bit of flavour.

To get cracking

To get cracking means to get started or to move quickly. In other words, **to get cracking** means to begin doing something quickly.

You can use the expression **to get cracking** to talk about work, cleaning, homework, housework, or any other task where something must be accomplished. For example, let's say you booked a vacation to Canada with your husband, and it is the night before your flight, but your husband still hasn't packed. If he doesn't begin packing soon, he won't have clothes and essentials for your vacation or, worse, you guys might be late for your flight! In this case, it would be appropriate to say, "You better **get cracking** on packing!"

So **to get cracking** means to get moving or to start doing something immediately.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get cracking**:

Brandon:	The home renovations are coming along nicely. We're just about ready to start laying the tiles in the bathroom.
Todd:	What time is it?
Brandon:	It's about 3:00 p.m.
Todd:	That gives us plenty of time to set up for laying the tiles first thing tomorrow. Let's get cracking .

Tammy:	The accountant called and said we're missing a bunch of paperwork for tax season.
Theresa:	Oh, that's right! I forgot to go through my shoebox of receipts in my closet.
Tammy:	That'll take hours to go through.
Theresa:	I'm afraid it will. Get dinner started and I'll get cracking .
Tammy:	OK, let's get this taken care of tonight, so it's not hanging over us all weekend.

What happens in [somewhere] stays in [somewhere]

Have you ever heard someone say, “**What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas?**” The expression was originally a marketing slogan to encourage people to visit Las Vegas in the United States. The idea behind the slogan was to encourage people to think about Las Vegas as a place where crazy adventures can take place.

This slogan has now evolved and become a common expression in North America, with people replacing Las Vegas with any place that they’ve visited. The expression **what happens in [somewhere] stays [somewhere]** means that any bad behaviour or scandalous acts that happen when you’re on vacation or travel as a group are not discussed with other people when you get back. In other words, these acts stay a secret.

You can use **what happens [somewhere] stays [somewhere]** to emphasize that something, like gambling, partying, or drinking, needs to be kept secret. This expression is often used as a joke or to excuse bad behaviour.

Here are a couple more examples with **what happens in [somewhere] stays in [somewhere]**:

Bob:	Oh man, I can’t believe how much I lost in the slot machines last night.
Tia:	Are you gonna tell your wife?
Bob:	No way! She would be so mad if she knew I gambled and lost.
Tia:	What happens in Vegas stays in Vegas.
Bob:	Exactly.

Larry:	Are you OK? You have a big bruise on your forehead.
Brenda:	I’m fine. I just had a little accident at the gym.
Larry:	Oh my goodness , what happened?
Brenda:	I was working out and doing lunges by the bench press, and I lunged too far forward and hit my head on the end of a barbell.
Larry:	That’s really embarrassing.
Brenda:	Luckily no one was around at the time, so it’s my little secret.
Larry:	What happens at the gym stays at the gym.

Quiz

1. True or false: To get cracking means to go on vacation.

- a) true
- b) false

2. Which of the following people is most likely a cheese lover?

- a) Amelia thinks cheese is delicious.
- b) John thinks he should buy cheese.
- c) Stephanie is allergic to cheese.
- d) Joanne ate some cheese.

3. True or false: Oh my goodness and oh my god can be used to express shock.

- a) true
- b) false

4. Mary just found out that Beth is moving to California, and is peppering her with questions. In other words, Mary is _____.

- a) sprinkling Beth with pepper
- b) adding seasoning to Beth's food
- c) taking a shower with questions
- d) asking Beth a lot of questions

5. Karen and her friends went to Montreal and gambled, partied, and drank a lot of cocktails. Which of the following expressions can Karen use to ask her friends to keep her behaviour on vacation a secret?

- a) what happens in behaviour stays in behaviour
- b) what happens in friends stays in friends
- c) what happens in Montreal stays in Montreal
- d) what happens in gambling stays in gambling

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.a 3.a 4.d 5.c

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